

# HISTORY of RAYMOND

by Elizabeth King

A CONTINUATION of the article appearing in Recorder Mar 12 1949

To face the future owing the Bank of Montreal \$97,000 in demand notes with a fast dwindling asset in a half exhausted cattle herd was just one picture that confronted Meeks Brothers. Thousands of dollars in land contracts had to be met bills owing Machinery Co., merchants, blacksmiths etc. had to be paid.

What was best to do and what could be done was the question. A herd of cattle that was worth approximately \$200,000 in August 1919, in ten months had shrunk in value through poverty and a declining market until the asset securing the bank loan amounted to about \$65,000.

Our creditors wanted this money. Our credit with the bank was exhausted. Bills were coming in "please pay up!" "This bill has been running a long time" etc. The Bank manager was much disturbed and nervous over our plight. The head of the bank was demanding more security on our loan. We had no liquid assets other than those tied up by the bank. The manager knew that. He, like us, didn't know what to say or do. The ring of the telephone became so repulsive that we answered with hesitation, as a shot in the ear about some debt seemed more offensive than if you took it in the open. This disastrous condition came about through one of the longest and coldest winters in Canadian history, coupled with an abnormally high cost of feed and a fast declining live stock market.

After the mists of a hard winter had cleared away, the Bank asked

for a new property statement; that meant the cattle would have to be counted and classed as to value. Stock taking on chattels and land values were considered also. The cattle were checked as they were rounded up for the July dipping. My brother Will, after looking the herd over gave way with this remark "Well, Jim, that a hell of a looking herd of cattle to raise a hundred thousand dollars out of". It was, at that. Thin in flesh, many with frozen feet, legs, horns and tails. Will's pessimism matched mine so I made no comment, somebody had to appear optimistic and hopeful.

It was embarrassing to meet your banker and make your report; after all losses were taken into consideration. Conditions unthought of and unheard of had arisen, over which we had no control.

The bank had been very generous in extending a good line of credit to provide feed for our stock which was exceeded by thousands of dollars in over drafts. To be honorable with our creditors and at the same time ease the situation we gave the bank of land to further secure our loan and again establish our credit. The mortgages bore 7 and 8 % interest at that time and later we made the bank a beneficiary in a \$47,000 partnership life insurance policy on which we paid \$3,300 in premiums each year.

The last words of advice from Father and Mother when we came to this country was "Don't let your enthusiasm carry you into debt to the extent that your obligations be-

come a burden to you".

In less than ten months our business had changed from one of complacency to one of bondage and debt. Looking back: yes we could have sold all the live stock in the year 1919 and avoided the situation; that meant going out of the cattle business with 35,000 acres of grass land to pay taxes on and no stock to graze on it—subject to government cancellation because we had no stock.

The burden of debt brings intimidation and fear and robs one of one of the freedoms. Under these handicaps we planned, worked and worried and denied ourselves of many things we thought we were entitled to—that this obligation might be lifted from our shoulders. At first we gave ourselves 10 years in which to free ourselves then 20 years and still had to boost the time before this obligation with the bank was finally cleared up.

Our only source of money to pay obligations was through the sale of wheat, cattle, sheep and wool. No one has forgotten the years of 1930 31, 32, and 33 when wheat sold for 20 to 40 cents per bushel, wool for 6 to 8 cents per pound, lambs 5 to 6 cents per pound and beef cows \$1.50 per hundred with best steers going at 3 cents.

We shipped our best heifers to Winnipeg and got back \$14. per head. During the depression years we bunched 100 steers and 200 cows for sale. They were all fat and showed good quality. Two representatives of a packing firm came by appointment as buyers. They proceeded to class the cattle and out of 100 steers they took 40. Then a new man fresh from the packing plant was sent into the cow herd to class or select the choice cows. He proceeded on horse back and took out 60 cows leaving 140.

He said, "I think I'm through." I was shocked and commenced to point out good cows, just as good as he had taken. "No, I'm through," he said. "What do you packers mean turning these good thick backed cows back at \$1.75 per hundred? Do you know", I said, "what I paid for your bull bologna in Raymond this morning? 19 1/2 cents per pound, processed bull meat." "I know you ranchers are not getting enough for your cattle", was his only reply.

I have related in this closing article, our experiences in trying to sell cattle to get money to pay obligations that people might know just what ranchers and live stock farmers had to pass through in the past. I have confined myself mostly to our own business because I knew more about it than I knew of the other fellows, but what was true in our case was likewise true with other ranchers whether they operated on a small or large scale.

During the past few weeks in these columns James E. Meeks has ably portrayed in writing, a vivid picture of early day ranching in Southern Alberta. He has described in detail the fierceness of that much talked of and never to be forgotten 1903 May snow storm which caused so much suffering to both man and beast and which also caused great losses, but the true pioneer spirit of courage and determination was so strong a part of their every day life they would not and did not falter, but struggled on until they gained a firm footing.

While the Meeks Brothers were out in all kinds of weather doing jobs which had to be done their wives were at home preparing plenty of appetizing food for their cold, hungry and tired husbands and doing a woman's part of standing by under

all conditions, to lend a helping hand and give support and encouragement. Mrs. Will Meeks (Mae) relates the following: "Will and I were married in the Manti Temple in 1897. In 1901 Will, with 42 M.I.A. missionaries were called on a six months mission to different parts of Utah, Idaho and Arizona and also Alberta, Canada. In 1902 Will came to Canada but went back for the winter. On the 28th of March 1903 a baby boy came to bless our home. We named him Elwood.

In July of that same year we sold all our possessions in Thirber, Utah and headed for Canada. When we arrived in Raymond we lived in a lean-to which was located on the spot where Jack Kenny and family now live. We had lived there but a short while when we moved to what

is now the Meeks ranch which is located half way between Raymond and Magrath. We lived there until 1907 when we moved to Raymond".

Mrs. Meeks told how, while living on the ranch, she would pile straw (continued on page four)



By Dr. F. J. Greaney, Director, Line Elevators Farm Service, Winnipeg, Manitoba

## Operation Seed Treatment

No farm practice in 1949 will give western farmers greater returns for the same small investment in money and time than will seed treatment. This spring, therefore, seed treatment should be "Operation No. 1" on all prairie farms. Unless seed grain is known to be free of smut, undamaged, and strong in germination it should be treated.

Benefits of Seed Treatment: 1. Controls surface seed-borne smut, seedling blight and root rot. 2. Combats soil-inhabiting fungi (molds) that rot seed, and destroy seedlings. It helps seedlings by inducing good stands of vigorous crop plants. It increases yields, improves grain quality, and reduces losses from smut and weed dockage. Yee, seed treatment offers two-way insurance — it disinfects and protects seed.

How to Treat. Nowadays, the organic mercury dusts such as "Ceresan", "Ceresan M" and "Leytosan" are the generally recommended chemicals for treating wheat, oats, barley and flax. Some of the more essential points in treating seed grain are as follows: (1) The seed should first be thoroughly cleaned. (2) For wheat, oats and barley, apply 1/2 ounce of chemical dust per bushel of seed. (3) For flax, use 1 1/2 ounces of dust per bushel of seed. (4) Treat wheat and flax at least 24 hours before sowing. (5) Treat oats and barley at least 8 days in advance of sowing. (6) Dry, well-cured seed can be safely treated 30 to 60 days before planting. (7) Use recommended dosages—no more, no less. (8) Remember that thorough mixing of seed and chemical dust is essential for best results.

Precautions. The organic mercury dusts are poisonous. Follow carefully the precautions given by the manufacturer of each seed disinfectant. Treated seed should not be used for food or fed to livestock.

For more detailed information on seed treatment consult your local Agricultural Representative, or write to your nearest Dominion Laboratory of Plant Pathology (Winnipeg, Saskatoon or Edmonton), or to Line Elevators Farm Service, Winnipeg.

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The highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

Tenders will be received until noon of April 12th by S. HESKETH, Secretary-Treasurer, St. Mary's River School Division No. 2, CARDSTON Alberta.